Department of Planning & Development

D. M. Sugimura, Director



RECOMMENDATION OF THE WEST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016723

Address: 901 Harrison Street

Applicant: Ankrom Moisan Architects for MacFarlane Partners, Inc.

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, November 05, 2014

Board Members Present: Mindy Black (Chair)

Christine Harrington

Kate Idziorek Boyd Pickrell Janet Stephenson

DPD Staff Present: Beth Hartwick

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: SM 160/85-240

Nearby Zones: (North) SM 160/85-240

(South) SM 160/85-240 (East) SM 160/85-240 (West) SM 160/85-240

Lot Area: 21,600 square feet



Current Development: The site is located on the southeast corner of Harrison St and 9th Avenue N in the South Lake Union neighborhood. An alley borders the east edge of the site. Existing development on site includes an early 20th century commercial structure and a surface parking lot. The northern portion of the structure is currently in use as City Hardware, a retail store.

The existing structure has been nominated for historic landmark status and is currently in review with the Landmarks Preservation Board. If the building is designated as a historic landmark, a Certificate of Approval from the Landmarks Preservation Board will be required to modify or demolish the structure.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character: The immediate vicinity includes a mix of development styles and vintages. The area is going through rapid redevelopment, with older 1-2 story commercial structures and surface parking lots being redeveloped to taller office and residential development. Most of the residential development is located one block to the west (along 8th Ave N) and several blocks to the east, east of Fairview Ave N. Most of the surrounding sites are being redeveloped for office structures. Development is currently under construction across the street to the north and west of the site, as well as several other sites within blocks of the subject property. Several more sites are proposed for development within a few blocks of the subject property.

9th Ave N is a minor arterial with transit routes and is designated as a future bicycle route, connecting the west side of Lake Union to the downtown core. Harrison Street is noted as a "Heart Location" in the South Lake Union Design Guidelines and is designated a Class 2 Pedestrian Street in the Land Use Code. The site is located within the Westlake area of the South Lake Union Design Guidelines.

Access: Existing vehicular access to the site is via the alley.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development is a 25-story residential building containing 292 units above 8,200 square feet of retail space. Parking for 185 vehicles is proposed below grade, to be accessed from the alley. The existing on site structure has been designated a Landmark structure and the three facades facing 9th Ave, Harrison St. and the alley and a portion of the south elevation will be preserved.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE April 2, 2014

The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016723) at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design Review Program/Project Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000

P.O. Box 34019

Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Board Acting Chair Boyd Pickrell disclosed that he works for the firm that prepared the historic landmark nomination report for the existing building on site. He noted that his firm is not involved in the design of the proposed development and he feels he can review the proposed design without conflict or bias.

The applicants presented additional massing options (2a and 2b) with the tower at the south end of the site and a podium that steps back from the north edge of the site. Massing Option 2a could allow the existing building to be incorporated into the new development, should it become a designated historic landmark. The applicant noted that if the building is designated as a historic landmark, the windows' tall sill height above the sidewalk elevation will be challenging for retail.

The applicant described Massing Option (2b) that places the tower at the south edge of the site, but isn't arranged to specifically accommodate the existing building.

The preferred podium massing responds to the existing power lines and required upper level setbacks. The street level design intent is to respond to the rapidly changing context of new development in the South Lake Union area, and specifically 9th Ave N. The podium height corresponds to the 45' podium of the development across the street to the west (currently under construction). The 9th Ave N street level façade is set back 8' to provide a buffer for the live-work units at street level, and the flexibility for these spaces to function as future commercial uses.

The preferred option includes a tower that is 20' narrower than the other options, with the longer façade facing 9th Ave N and the narrower façade facing Harrison St. The intent of this tower shape is to provide a buffer from the adjacent buildings to the east and west and minimize the width of the shadow cast on the plaza to the north across Harrison Street (under construction). The narrower tower shape also allows increased natural daylighting in the tower, which is consistent with LEED sustainability principles.

The intent of the landscape plan is to provide a curb bulb at the intersection, maximize green space at grade, and use the stepped upper levels for landscaped terraces and open space that relates to street-level landscaping and sidewalk grade.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following public comments were offered at the meeting:

- The square building has less shadow impacts than the preferred tower massing.
- The departure to place the mechanical at the northwest corner of the tower further increases the shadow impacts, and further increases the appearance of height, which is already out of scale with nearby neighboring development.

- The proposed treatment of the live-work edge may not be sufficient to buffer the
 residential aspect of this use from the street level activity. The Veer Lofts building also
 has setbacks but still has mostly closed blinds at the street level. A buffer should be
 provided.
- Supported the proposed residential use in the neighborhood.
- There's a streetscape plan for 9th Ave N. The plan isn't adopted, but it indicates the neighborhood's intent for the design of this area and can provide helpful context.
- The north-south orientation of the narrow tower is a good contextual response to the building across the alley (which is also proposed as residential).
- Departure #3 may not be something that's departable through design review.
- The alley façade should be treated as another primary façade. The alley should be activated, since the neighborhood alleys will become more active pedestrian areas.
- Retail should be provided on 9th Ave N, rather than live-work. Live-work will more likely be residential and not activate the streetscape.
- Supported the proposed departures.
- The rooftop element and/or tower could be placed further to the south without much impact to the sun on the outdoor areas proposed at the roof.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE: April 2, 2014

- 1. Architectural Concept. The Board supported the preferred massing option for the slender tower and the street level design. The Board recommended that the tower be further modulated. The tower and podium design should be integrated.
 - a. The Board noted that the slender tower relates better to the context of the building to the north, creates a better overall building proportion, and provides an appropriate response to natural daylighting and managing solar heat gain. (CS1.B.3, CS2.II.ii)
 - b. The tower should be further modulated on the north and west facades to enhance the articulation and the slender appearance of the tower. The Board suggested that approximately 10' deep modulation would meet this guidance, rather than the proposed 2' to 3' modulation, in order to relate to the overall scale and enhance the tower concept. The tower will be taller than surrounding buildings and very visible in the skyline. (CS2.A.2, CS2.II.ii, DC1.A)
 - c. The design of the podium and tower design should be integrated, and should respond to the context of nearby developments. The Board specified that while there are no other similar tower heights proposed nearby, there are developments with podium and upper building compositions. The proposed design should respond to the context of nearby transitions between podium and upper level building areas. (DC1.B, DC1.D)
 - d. The applicant should consider the possibility of incorporating the existing building façade into the proposed development, even if the Landmarks Board review doesn't

result in a historic landmark designation. The overall design should result in a cohesive design expression. (CS3.B.2, CS3.II.ii and iv)

i. If the building is not landmarked, the Board noted that the façade could be modified to be made more conducive to retail uses.

2. Street Level Design. The Board encouraged activation of the street frontage.

- a. The Board encouraged the applicant to strongly consider placing retail on 9th Ave N, which will provide more immediate street level transparency and activity than livework uses. (CS2.B.2, PL2.I)
- b. The street level design should respond to the developing context at the intersection and the Heart Location designation of Harrison St. This corner should enhance the character of the "outdoor room" of the street frontage at that intersection. (CS2.B.3, CS2.C, CS2.I.iv, PL1.A.1)
- c. The Board supported the proposed curb bulb and street furniture to enhance the pedestrian experience. (PL1.III)
- d. The Board supported varying the design of the overhead weather protection at the street frontage, and noted that the design should differentiate this street frontage from the development across 9th Ave N. (PL2.C)
- e. The Board also supported the conceptual sketches indicating the design intent for the street level entries, street facing facades, landscaping, and hardscape. (PL3.A.1 and 4)
 - i. The Board noted that if live-work continues to be proposed at 9th Ave N., the entries should be designed in response to the residential entries neighborhood Design Guideline (PL3.III)
- f. The 9th Ave N. curb bulb and street level treatment should be designed to respond to the intended bicycle route along 9th Ave N. and the neighborhood streetscape plan for 9th Ave N.
- 3. Alley. Given the proposed activation of the alley and connection to the pedestrian amenities across the alley, the alley frontage should be designed to enhance the design intent.
 - a. Lighting should enhance pedestrian safety, especially at the alley. (PL1.I.iii)
 - b. The Board noted that since the north end of the alley will include pedestrian activity, the location of services near the southeast corner of the site is an appropriate response to the context and the proposed design. (DC1.C.4)
 - c. The alley façade should be designed to be consistent with the other three facades of the building, given the pedestrian activity, visibility of the façade, and the proposed residential use across the alley. (DC2.B.1)

RECOMMENDATION November 5, 2014

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DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Between the EDG meeting and the Recommendation meeting the existing on site structure has been designated as a historic Landmark structure named as 901 Harrison St. The applicant has been working with the Architectural Review Committee, and the three facades facing Harrison St, 9th Ave N and the alley, along with a portion of the south elevation, will be preserved and have been incorporated into the proposed development.

The applicant presented the project with the incorporated Landmark structure, a strong concrete podium and a large vertical gabion wall at the residential entry. The gabion wall is meant to be a representation of the history of the site and will be constructed as a 12" thick stainless steel basket filled with indigenous rocks, in front of a glass wall. Light from the spaces behind will pierce through the wall. The applicant noted that the existing building was constructed for a sand and gravel company and the facility acted partially as a showroom for their products. The gabion wall is meant to reference these roots.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments offered at the meeting.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After considering the context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following design guidance.

RECOMMENDATION MEETING: November 5, 2014

- Massing and Design: The Board commended the applicant on a beautiful design, and addressing the guidance given at the EDG meeting. The Board emphasized that the built structure needs to match the design and materials as presented at the Recommendation meeting, which are critical to the Recommendation for design approval. They were supportive of the incorporation of the existing Landmark façades and the influence of the Landmark structure on the design of the podium. (CS2.A.1 & 2, CS3.b, CS3.II.ii, DC2.B.1)
 - a. The materials as presented in the Recommendation packet and meeting are critical to the design concept. (DC4.A)
 - b. The Board supported the warm copper tones of the panels in contrast to the glass. (DC4.A.1)
 - c. The Board was supportive of the 'jewel box' effect, especially at night, of the continuous glazed façade of the west and north façade above the landmark

structure on the 3rd and 4th levels. They expressed concern that residents might negate the design intent by covering the windows. The Land Use Planner from DPD explained this is not something that can be conditioned or controlled. (DC2.B.1)

- 2. Relationship to the Street: The Board was pleased with the change from live/work to retail along 9th Ave. (CS2.B.2, PL3.C)
 - a. The Board questioned why the overhead canopy at the retail space facing 9th Ave N was only 6' wide. The applicant had responded that massing and structural design limited the width. The Board recommended a condition to explore providing a wider canopy and to consider ground support for the canopy if needed. (PL2.C.1)
 - b. The Board was supportive of the extended curb bulb on 9th Ave N and recommended a condition to provide lighting as part of the landscaping and design. (PL1.I.iii, PL2.I.ii, DC4.C.1)
 - c. The Board recommended a condition to provide signage, lighting and safe and easy wayfinding to bike storage areas. (PL4.B.2)
- 3. Gabion Wall: The Board was excited about the proposed gabion wall at the edge of the residential entry. They encouraged the applicant to contact artist/architects who have built successful gabion walls to how to successfully construct the proposed wall. (CS3.B.2, DC3.II.i, DC4.A)
 - Detail the gabion wall so that it provides the intent of letting light through the wall and references the historic context and former use of the Landmark structure. (CS3.B.2, DC4.A)
 - If the gabion wall cannot be constructed as shown the Board recommended a condition to provide a textured wall of a similar scale and historical connection. (CS3.B.2)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines identified by the Board as Priority Guidelines are summarized below, while all guidelines remain applicable. For the full text please visit the Design Review website.

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-B Sunlight and Natural Ventilation

CS1-B-3. Managing Solar Gain: Manage direct sunlight falling on south and west facing facades through shading devices and existing or newly planted trees.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

CS2-I Responding to Site Characteristics

CS2-I-iv. Heart Locations: Several areas have been identified as "heart locations." Heart locations serve as the perceived center of commercial and social activity within the neighborhood. These locations provide anchors for the community as they have identity and give form to the neighborhood. Development at heart locations should enhance their central character through appropriate site planning and architecture. These sites have a high priority for improvements to the public realm. A new building's primary entry and facade should respond to the heart location. Special street treatments are likely to occur and buildings will need to respond to these centers of commercial and social activity. Amenities to consider are: pedestrian lighting, public art, special paving, landscaping, additional public open space provided by curb bulbs and entry plazas. See full guidelines for Heart Locations

CS2-II Height, Bulk, and Scale Compatibility

CS2-II-ii. Upper-level Setbacks: Encourage stepping back an elevation at upper levels for development taller than 55 feet to take advantage of views and increase sunlight at street level. Where stepping back upper floors is not practical or appropriate other design considerations may be considered, such as modulations or separations between structures.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

CS3-II Architectural Context

CS3-II-ii. Preservation: Re-use and preserve important buildings and landmarks when possible.

CS3-II-iv. Historic Aesthetic: Respond to the history and character in the adjacent vicinity in terms of patterns, style, and scale. Encourage historic character to be revealed and reclaimed, for example through use of community artifacts, and historic materials, forms and textures.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-A Network of Open Spaces

PL1-A-1. Enhancing Open Space: Design the building and open spaces to positively contribute to a broader network of open spaces throughout the neighborhood.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

PL1-I Human Activity

PL1-I-iii. Lighting: Design for a network of safe and well-lit connections to encourage human activity and link existing high activity areas.

PL1-III Pedestrian Open Spaces and Entrances

PL1-III-i. Public Realm Amenity: New developments are encouraged to work with the Design Review Board and interested citizens to provide features that enhance the public realm, i.e. the transition zone between private property and the public right of way. The Board is generally willing to consider a departure in open space requirements if the project proponent provides an acceptable plan for features such as:

- a. curb bulbs adjacent to active retail spaces where they are not interfering with primary corridors that are designated for high levels of traffic flow;
- b. pedestrian-oriented street lighting;
- c. street furniture.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-C Weather Protection

PL2-C-1. Locations and Coverage: Overhead weather protection is encouraged and should be located at or near uses that generate pedestrian activity such as entries, retail uses, and transit stops.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

PL2-I Streetscape Compatibility

PL2-I-i. Street Level Uses: Encourage provision of spaces for street level uses that vary in size, width, and depth. Encourage the use of awnings and weather protection along street fronts to enhance the pedestrian environment.

PL1-I-ii. Streetscape Amenities: Provide pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities

- a. tree grates;
- b. benches;
- c. lighting.

PL1-I-iii. Sidewalk Retail: Where appropriate, configure retail space so that it can spill-out onto the sidewalk (retaining six feet for pedestrian movement, where the sidewalk is sufficiently wide).

PL3 Street-Level Interaction: Encourage human interaction and activity at the street-level with clear connections to building entries and edges.

PL3-A Entries

PL3-A-1. Design Objectives: Design primary entries to be obvious, identifiable, and distinctive with clear lines of sight and lobbies visually connected to the street.

PL3-A-4. Ensemble of Elements: Design the entry as a collection of coordinated elements including the door(s), overhead features, ground surface, landscaping, lighting, and other features.

South Lake Union Supplemental Guidance:

PL3-III Transition Between Residence and Street

PL3-III-i. Residential Entries: Consider designing the entries of residential buildings to enhance the character of the streetscape through the use of small gardens, stoops and other elements to create a transition between the public and private areas. Consider design options to accommodate various residential uses, i.e., townhouse, live-work, apartment and senior-assisted housing.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

- **PL4-B-1. Early Planning:** Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.
- **PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities:** Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.
- **PL4-B-3. Bike Connections:** Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-C Parking and Service Uses

- **DC1-C-1. Below-Grade Parking:** Locate parking below grade wherever possible. Where a surface parking lot is the only alternative, locate the parking in rear or side yards, or on lower or less visible portions of the site.
- **DC1-C-2. Visual Impacts:** Reduce the visual impacts of parking lots, parking structures, entrances, and related signs and equipment as much as possible.
- **DC1-C-3. Multiple Uses:** Design parking areas to serve multiple uses such as children's play space, outdoor gathering areas, sports courts, woonerf, or common space in multifamily projects.
- **DC1-C-4. Service Uses:** Locate and design service entries, loading docks, and trash receptacles away from pedestrian areas or to a less visible portion of the site to reduce possible impacts of these facilities on building aesthetics and pedestrian circulation.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-A Massing

- **DC2-A-1. Site Characteristics and Uses:** Arrange the mass of the building taking into consideration the characteristics of the site and the proposed uses of the building and its open space.
- **DC2-A-2. Reducing Perceived Mass:** Use secondary architectural elements to reduce the perceived mass of larger projects.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept **DC2-D-2. Texture:** Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale,

and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or "texture," particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

The Board's recommendation on the requested departure(s) will be based upon the departure's potential to help the project better meet these design guideline priorities and achieve a better overall design than could be achieved without the departure(s). The Board's recommendation will be reserved until the final Board meeting.

At the time of the Recommendation meeting (the final Board meeting), the following departures were requested:

1. **Rooftop Features (SMC 23.48.010.H.7.b):** The Code requires that all rooftop features be located at least 10' from the roof edge. The applicant proposes to locate portions of the penthouse, which will house an enclosed rooftop amenity area, at the north and west roof edges, in order to visually integrate the penthouse with the north and west building façades, and allow for a more contiguous roof deck area.

This departure will provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines CS2-A-2 Architectural Presence and DC2-B-1. Façade Composition. The top of the tower will be very visible and a contiguous elevation at the area of the amenity penthouse creates an attractive and well-proportioned façade.

The Board voted unanimously to grant this departure.

2. **Street Level Development Standards (SMC 23.48.014.D):** The Code requires that on Class 2 Pedestrian Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets, the minimum height for street-facing facades is 25 feet. Harrison St. is a Class 2 pedestrian Street. The Landmark structure along Harrison St. does not meet this requirement.

This departure will provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines CS3-B-2 Historical/Cultural References and CS3-II-ii Preservation. The existing structure on site has been designated as a Landmark structure and is being preserved thus meeting these guideline. As well, Landmark structures do not need to meet current code street development standards.

The Board voted unanimously to grant this departure.

3. **Street Level Development Standards (SMC 23.48.014.A.2.b):** The Code requires transparency and blank façade standards for the area of a street facing facade between 2 and 8 feet above a sidewalk. For Class 2 Pedestrian Streets and Neighborhood Green Streets, a minimum of 60 percent of the street facing facade must be transparent and the total of all blank facade segments, including garage doors, shall not exceed 40 percent of the street facade. Harrison St. is a Class 2 pedestrian Street. For other streets (9th Ave N) a minimum of 30 percent of the street facing facade must be transparent and the total of all blank facade segments, including garage doors, shall not exceed 70 percent of the street facade. The Landmark structure along Harrison St. and 9th Ave does not meet these requirements.

This departure will provide an overall design that would better meet the intent of Design Review Guidelines CS3-B-2 Historical/Cultural References and CS3-II-ii Preservation. The existing structure on site has been designated as a Landmark structure and is being preserved thus meeting these guideline. As well, Landmark structures do not need to meet current code street development standards.

The Board voted unanimously to grant this departure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations summarized below was based on the design review packet dated November 5, 2014 and the materials shown and verbally described by the applicant at the November 5, 2014 Design Recommendation Meeting. After considering the site and context, hearing public comment, reconsidering the previously identified design priorities and reviewing the materials, the five Design Review Board members recommended APPROVAL of the subject design.

The following are the Board's Recommended Conditions:

- 1. Explore providing a wider canopy at the retail space along 9th Ave N and consider ground support for the canopy if needed. (PL2.C.1)
- 2. Provide lighting as part of the landscaping and design in the extended curb bulb along 9th Ave N. (PL1.I.iii, PL2.I.ii, DC4.C.1)
- 3. Provide signage, lighting and safe and easy wayfinding to bike storage areas. (PL4.B.2)
- 4. If the gabion wall cannot be constructed as shown provide a textured wall of a similar scale and historical connection. (CS3.B.2)